

They also asked for the school lunch program and breakfast program to be changed because the witnesses even called by the majority side said that that is wrong that we are cutting off food to children and some of the programs that have been developed over both Democrat and Republican administrations. But we used the testimony from the hearing yesterday and I called some senior citizens sites in my district and said, okay, just one provision of it that says that if you are under the age of 63, how many people are served in the Magnolia Multi-Purpose Center in Houston that are under the age of 63 and not disabled.

□ 2100

They told us, they said that this is the number we serve. They actually serve 35 people who are not classified as disabled and under the age of 63. The gentleman can look at the bill itself. It states if you are under 63, not disabled, you have to agree to work, or sign an affidavit to say you are working.

Mr. KINGSTON. Reclaiming my time for the purpose of asking a question, I am not sure about the details of that, but if I am hearing the gentleman correctly, he is saying if somebody is 63 years old and in good physical shape and able to work they are entitled to a free meal just because of their age.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). The time of the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. KINGSTON] has expired.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Maybe next week we can continue this dialog.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio [Ms. KAPTUR] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Ms. KAPTUR. addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York [Mr. OWENS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. OWENS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

INCREASING THE MINIMUM WAGE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina [Mrs. CLAYTON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, I support welfare reform. Reform of our welfare system is best accomplished by rewarding work—by making work a prize rather than a penalty.

Work is a prize when a full-time worker can earn enough to pay for life's necessities.

Work is a penalty when a person can achieve a better quality of life when getting public entitlements rather than holding a job.

That is why any discussion of welfare reform, must also include a discussion of other reforms. One such reform is minimum wage reform.

Contrary to a popular misconception, most minimum wage earners are adults, not young people.

And, many of the minimum wage workers are from rural communities. In fact, it is twice as likely that a minimum wage worker will be from a rural community than from an urban community.

The most disturbing fact is that far too many minimum wage workers have families, spouses and children who depend on them.

That is disturbing, Mr. Speaker, because a full-time worker, heading a family of three—the typical size of an American family today—and earning a minimum wage, would fall below the poverty line by close to \$2,500 dollars. Imagine that.

In this country, a person can work, every day, full-time, and still be below the poverty level. Work, in that situation, is a penalty.

A review of the history of the minimum wage is revealing. First implemented in 1938, with passage of the Fair Labor Standards Act, the minimum wage covers ninety percent of all workers.

Between 1950 and 1981, the minimum wage was raised twelve times. During the 1980's, however, while prices were rising by 30 percent, Congress did not raise the minimum wage. Increases in 1980 and 1991 brought the wage to its current level, but did not bring it level with the cost of living.

In 1980, during the period when there were regular increases in the minimum wage as costs rose, a worker, with a family of three, earning a minimum wage, would have been above the poverty level. Work, in that situation, is a prize.

Enlightened economists and most recent studies now conclude that, increases in the minimum wage produce no significant changes in employment either up or down—among low wage firms.

Raising wages does not mean losing jobs. A recent, comprehensive study dramatically demonstrates this conclusion.

The State of New Jersey raised its minimum wage to \$5.05. It's neighbor, the State of Pennsylvania, kept its minimum wage at the required level, \$4.25.

According to the study, the number of low-wage workers in New Jersey actually increased, following the increase in the minimum wage, while the number of low-wage workers in Pennsylvania remained the same. Those are compelling results.

Since April, 1991, the minimum wage has remained constant, while the cost of living has risen, yet another 11 percent.

When costs go up and wages remain the same, the effect is that disposal income declines.

In other words, the ability of a minimum-wage worker to shelter, feed, and clothe his or her family becomes more and more difficult.

If, while working full time, a person has difficulty paying for housing, food, and clothing, the basic necessities, he or she can become discouraged.

The minimum wage affects many workers in America. More than 4 million individuals—6.6 percent of the labor force—worked at or below the labor force in 1993.

Another 9.2 million workers earned just above the minimum wage.

Mr. Speaker, it should interest us to know that most of the minimum-wage workers are women.

In fact, three out of every five or 62 percent of the minimum-wage workers are women. And, minimum-wage workers are more likely to be poor.

Last Congress, we expanded the earned income tax credit, and that helps those families who battle poverty each day.

But, that tax credit, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, does not go far enough to reach down and bring the minimum-wage workers out of poverty. We must do more.

When a person works, he or she feels good about themselves. They contribute to their communities, and they are in a position to help their families. Work gives a person an identity.

Our policies, therefore, should encourage people to work. We discourage them from working when we force them to work at wages that leave them in poverty.

Soon, Congress will have the opportunity to raise the minimum wage. Let's make rewarding work and wage reform an essential part of welfare reform. Let's encourage people to work. And, let's insure that they can work at a livable wage.

Let's raise the minimum wage.

CLEAN WATER ACT AMENDMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Mr. FILNER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, today my colleagues and I from San Diego introduced a bill to amend the Clean Water Act to allow San Diego to treat its sewage in a cost-effective and environmentally sensitive manner.

This has been a long fight for many of us. I have been fighting against non-sensical Fed requirements for more than 6 years.

These efforts began when I was a member of the San Diego City Council. During this time, I often found myself on the losing end of 7 to 2 votes—because a majority of my city council did not want to challenge the Environmental Protection Agency. But I was convinced—by my own research and the testimony of scientists from the prestigious Scripps Institution of